



September 28, 2020

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
74-09 37th Avenue
Suite 305
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
(via email)

Dear Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez,

I hope you are doing well and staying healthy.

As you undoubtedly know, over the course of this election year, it has been challenging to engage with constituents and voters in the 14th Congressional District because of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the ways in which I have been communicating essential information to and conversing with the people of Queens and the Bronx is through a series of tele-town hall meetings. We have conducted a series of them on issues that matter to New Yorkers, including health and safety during the pandemic, financial relief and addressing the crime that's spiraling out of control in our community.

It is always of critical importance during an election campaign that the candidates communicate directly with voters and lay out their vision, agenda and plans for the district. The marketplace of ideas that is American Democracy is something I have been teaching in my civics classes for over 20 years and it has become even more critical this year because of the uncertainty and insecurity the coronavirus pandemic has brought upon our great city. It is with this in mind, that I urge you to accept, as I have, the invitation from the Locust Point Civic Association to debate on Tuesday, October 6th.

I also further challenge you to debate me, either in person adhering to CDC health and safety guidelines, or via the virtual communication service of your choice to the following series of five additional debates:



- Sunday, October 11th in Queens on public safety and our plans to address the crime that is spiraling out of control in our community;
- Tuesday, October 13th in Queens on fiscal issues and our plans to revive the local and national economies;
- Wednesday, October 21st in the Bronx on Constitutional issues;
- Tuesday, October 27th in Queens on healthcare; and
- Thursday, October 29th in Queens on our vision for representation of the 14th Congressional District.

A series of debates will allow both of us to talk directly to the voters, to lay out our vision, to discuss our plans, and to make our respective cases as to why we deserve their vote. The right to vote has never been more important, the stakes of an election never higher. These debates will give us an opportunity to tell the voters what either of us will do as a member of the next Congress and provide us the chance to speak our minds openly and debate our differences honestly. The hard-working people of New York's 14th Congressional District deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I know from your previous campaign that you hold debates in very high esteem, saying "absentee leadership is not acceptable for our poor and working-class families." I couldn't agree more and I look forward to seeing you at the Locust Point Civic Association debate on October 6th and to your accepting my offer to debate six times throughout the district.

Sincerely,

John C. Cummings
Former NYPD (ret)
High School Civics Teacher, St. Raymond High School for Boys
Candidate for Congress, New York's 14th Congressional District